Fidel Says Those Missiles Were His Own Idea, See P. 2

Canada's Leading Paper Satirizes U.S. Devotion to International Law in Cuban Crisis

"It (seizure of the Cuban fishing boats) presents a ludicrous picture—the U.S. protesting a violation of international law, as represented by 38 men and boys fishing in Florida waters without a license, to the country over which it has been flying regular surveillance missions in violation of international law. . . .

"The Secretary of State did not say it, but the State Department has been encouraging speculation that the Cuban government sent the boats into Florida waters as a matter of deliberate provocation. Its alleged purpose was to bring Cuba's demand for the evacuation of Guantanamo to world attention once more. This is to attribute prescient cleverness to the Cubans or at worst a stroke of blind luck. It was impossible for the Cuban government to assume the imprisonment of the crews by the U.S. Government, since the federal statute dealing with encroachments on territorial waters contains no penalties.

"Havana could hardly have proceeded on so preposterous an assumption as that the U.S. would turn over the crews to the State of Florida to be tried for, of all things, fishing without a license. That is what was done, however."

—Toronto Globe and Mail from Washington, Feb. 8.

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Report on Cuba The *New York Times* Was Afraid to Print

This issue is edited as much for editors abroad as for readers at home. It illustrates the extent to which independent reporting and thinking about Cuba in this country have been restricted by intimidation. The report on Cuba to which we give over this week's issue is by no obscure journalist, with access only to the small publications on the fringes of our society. He is Herbert L. Matthews and an editor of America's greatest newspaper, the *New York Times*. His paper only a few weeks ago reprinted from *The New Republic* a sensational and friendly report on Cuba by the French journalist, Jean Daniel. Yet when Matthews visited Cuba and came back with an equally sensational report, not a line appeared in his own paper. Apparently a Frenchman or some other foreign journalist can be allowed wide publication about Cuba in the United States even if he transgresses American "party line" on this, our most controversial, subject. But when an American does it, the report seems to be unfit—or at least too hazardous—to print in the *New York Times*. It was left to the Hispanic American Institute at Stanford University, whose scholarly monthly report on Latin American affairs has a total circulation of 2500, to bring out the Matthews report in a special pamphlet from which we present salient excerpts in our pages.

No Subject More Important to Our Future

We do not say this to hurt the *New York Times*. In our lifetime it has never been a better or a more liberal newspaper. Its editorials on the silly and mendacious crisis whipped up by the State Department over the Cuban fishing boats in the past week deserve applause. It is the first U.S. daily to reestablish a bureau in Havana, a major result of the visit made there last Fall by Mr. Matthews. But considering the paucity of news from Cuba, the sensational character of one story Mr. Matthews brought back (see page 2), and the weight attached to his opinions, it is striking that these were not published by the *New York Times* itself. Mr. Matthews knows Spanish well. He distinguished himself by his courageous and sympathetic reporting of the Spanish Civil War in the *New York Times* in the 30's under circumstances almost as difficult as those which surround the Cuban revolution today. He knows Latin America and Cuba. His interview with Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra in 1957 was a journalistic feat, disproving the claim of the Batista government that Fidel's little band of guerrillas had been wiped out. No U.S. reporter is better equipped to provide a thorough, an informed and an objective report on Cuba today. On no subject is it more important to develop a balanced public opinion in this country. It is no exaggeration to say—as the missile crisis demonstrated—that our future and the world's may be placed in jeopardy by the mishandling of our Cuban relations. Yet only a relative handful of Americans will ever read this Matthews report.

(Continued on Page Four)

Our Iron Curtain Around Cuba

"It is axiomatic in journalism that it is not possible to know what is happening anywhere unless you go there. In my own case, I had not been to Cuba since August 1960. The intensely hostile climate of opinion in the United States, some of which is directed towards me and the New York Times, and the difficulties placed in the way of all visitors by the U.S. and Mexican Governments, made an earlier trip unwise.

"The freedom for Americans to know and to travel has been curtailed, so far as Cuba is concerned. For teachers and students this is frightening. As scholars they are not allowed by the U.S. Government to go to Cuba to study one of the most important political and social phenomena of modern times. As a result none of our leading Latin Americanists knows what is happening in Cuba; they cannot teach with authority on the subject; they cannot even read the many articles and books on the Cuban Revolution now being published, with the ability to judge whether they are right or wrong, good or bad.

"All they can do (and Theodore Draper does it brilliantly and effectively, as always, in the January 1964 issue of Commentary) is to try to construct a plausible picture by piecing together speeches, decrees and reports, and interpreting them by applying Marxist and American liberal democratic yardsticks. Tree after tree is accurately described, but the forest is missed."

—Herbert L. Matthews: Return to Cuba.

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Castro Insists It Was His Idea, Not Moscow's To Put Missiles in Cuba . . .

The excerpts on these two pages were taken from a special report just issued by the Institute of Hispanic American and Luso-Brazilian Studies, Bolivar House, Stanford University, California. This report was written by Herbert L. Matthews of the New York Times, who is on the Board of the Institute. It is called "Return to Cuba." Twice before, in 1959 and 1960, Mr. Matthews issued outstanding reports on the Cuban problem through the Institute. Its director, Ronald Hilton, has the distinction of being the first man in the U.S. to expose the existence of the CIA's training camps in Guatemala for the April, 1961, Cuban invasion. The monthly Hispanic American Report published by the Institute is invaluable for Latin American affairs. If you wish to read the full report from which these few excerpts were taken, you can obtain it by sending $1 to the Institute at the address given below. Please mention the Weekly. What follows is from the Matthews report:

By Herbert L. Matthews

He [Castro] talked a good deal about the nuclear missile crisis of October 1962 (which Cubans always refer to as 'the crisis of the Caribbean'). It was in most respects, the same story that he told three and a half weeks later to Jean Daniel of *L'Express* of Paris, and which was widely reproduced. However, in one crucial detail of historic importance it was the opposite of what Jean Daniel had understood.

The essence of Fidel's account was that the Cubans, on the basis of information they were getting early in 1962 from a number of sources, felt almost sure that the U.S. was preparing a military invasion of Cuba. They were strengthened in this belief after Aleksei I. Adzhubei, Premier Khruschev's son-in-law and editor of Izvestia, had an interview with President Kennedy early that year. The official report of the interview was conveyed to the Cubans who interpreted some of the things that President Kennedy said as confirmation of their belief in a planned invasion. (The State Department denied that President Kennedy was so threatening, or that the U.S. was planning an invasion.)

Castro Says The Missiles Were "Defensive"

The Russians, Fidel Castro argued, were also persuaded that Cuba was going to be attacked. In these circumstances, he asserted, the nuclear weapons were 'defensive'; they were intended to discourage the U.S. from going ahead with its plans.

"In the world today," he went on, "there are two war phobias, one of a nuclear war which can be ruled out because nobody wants it, and the other of local wars. The U.S. and Russia, in the crisis of the Caribbean, were facing a world war but Cuba was facing a local war. She was going to be attacked by the U.S."

If Cuba were attacked, Fidel continued, the Russians would have been drawn in because of their commitment to the Castro government.

At this point he said to us flatly, in response to my question, that the idea of installing the nuclear weapons was his, not the Russians. Jean Daniel, in his account, published in the *New York Times* and *New Republic*, on the contrary wrote: "Castro confirmed that the initial idea originated with the Russians, and with them alone: 'The only thing we asked the Russians to do was to make it clear to the U.S. that any attack on us was an attack on the Soviet Union. We had extensive discussion before arriving at the proposal of installing guided missiles, a proposal which surprised us at first and gave us great pause. We finally went along with the Soviet proposal because, on the one hand, the Russians convinced us that the U.S. would not let itself be intimidated by conventional weapons, and secondly because it was impossible for us not to share the risks which the Soviet Union was taking to save us'."

In order to get this important point straight, once and for all, I spoke to Premier Castro over the telephone on the night of Jan. 7, 1964. He confirmed what he had said to us in Havana and in no uncertain terms. In fact, he clearly wanted the Daniel version of what he said (I regret to say, for my profession, that he called it "a journalistic version") to be corrected for the historic record.

He also said that Daniel was wrong in putting the entire emphasis on Adzhubei's talk with President Kennedy. This, said Fidel, was only one element (*"un elemento en el juicio"*) among a great many that were taken into consideration.

Then he said, and during our 15-minute conversation he repeated it emphatically at least four times: *"Fuimos nosotros que hemos planteado la idea de los misiles"* ("We were the ones who put forward the idea of the missiles.")

At another point he said it was not for the Russians to make such a suggestion: "It was for us to do so. We showed them in an incontrovertible way that an invasion was being planned." His conclusion in discussing the whole *crisis del Caribe* with us was this: "War was avoided but peace was not gained."

The Food Situation In Cuba

"There is enough to eat on the whole, but it is dull, with not much variety, and with constant distribution bottlenecks in Havana and other cities. There is no starvation or even serious malnutrition, but getting enough food is often extremely difficult and tiring for housewives. There is also enough fish in quantity, thanks to the high seas vessels bought from Japan and the ones the Russians gave Cuba, but it is fish that Cubans never ate and do not like—tuna, hake, and soon-to-be-marketed herring and cod.

"Children are especially well fed. Every child to the age of seven gets a quart of milk a day without fail. As a result of the hurricane the egg ration for adults in Havana was suspended while we were there, but not for the children."

—Herbert L. Matthews: Return to Cuba.

Cuba's Dependence on the Soviets

"The Cuban leaders . . . do not see their economic dependence on the Soviet bloc as comparable to the previous economic domination by the U.S. For instance, the Russians buy Cuban sugar, but they do not own any Cubar sugar plantations or mills and do not want to. The Cubans assert that they will take no dictation from the Russians and—for anyone who knows Cubans—this is plausible.

"The cost of the Soviet bloc of sustaining the Cuban revolution, I was told in Havana, has been greatly exaggerated by Washington and the American press. Cubans say it is nothing like the $1,000,000 a day figure generally given in the U.S. I could not get a valid figure, although one good authority ventured an estimate of $100,000,000 a year."

—Herbert L. Matthews: Return to Cuba.

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. . . Communists Take A Back Seat in "Marxist-Leninist" State He Set Up

(More From the Matthews Report on Cuba)

To concentrate on Cuban Communism is to miss the forest for the trees. The Cuban Revolution is a very complicated phenomenon. It is bad and good, depending on what one looks at, what classes of people one considers.

It is also worse or better depending on how moral judgments are applied. If Communism is a sin, a heresy, a morally evil system, then Cuba has to be—as it is in the United States—condemned as if it were a hell on earth. If moral judgments are used to say, for instance, that is better for the children of the poor to be well fed, well taken care of, well clothed, educated, taught trades—as the greater part of them are in Cuba today for the first time in history, even if they are indoctrinated with Marxism-Leninism—then one reaches another result.

One can say that liberty is what we have under the U.S. Constitution, and since the Cubans do not have these liberties they are not free. Fidel Castro asks: "Can you really say to a Cuban Negro who now, for the first time has full equal rights and no discrimination that he is not free, and say to a Negro in Alabama or Mississippi that he is free?" There is a valid answer to this question, but it is not a simple answer.

Fidel and the Cuban CP

. . . the Cuban Communist steadily gained influence in that early period; the old political parties disappeared; the 26th of July Movement split into Left and Right and faded into the background. The links to Russia, the break with the United States, the embrace of Marxism-Leninism all pointed in one direction. Then came Fidel Castro's stunning attack on "sectarianism" and the old-line Cuban Communists of the PSP in March 1962. It was directed specifically at the Organizing Secretary, Anibal Escalante, who was trying to put party men into all key positions.

Fidel saw *his* revolution, his *Cuban* revolution, threatened and broke the power of the PSP so effectively that it has never come back. The problem of giving Cuba a hopefully permanent "Marxist-Leninist" political structure was already under way. A preliminary, tentative political setup, the Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas (ORI) was loosely thrown together in mid-1961 with the understanding that it was to be supplanted by a formal, permanent institution called the Partido Unificado de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba (PURSC).

The important feature to report today is that the PURSC is approaching its completed form . . . the idea is to bring together all the elements that will serve the Revolution loyally and efficiently. The PSP—the Cuban Communists—are merely one element; they do not control the PURSC or even play the most important role in it. The baffling distinction between Cuban Communism and Cuban Marxism-Leninism has to be made here as elsewhere. The remnants of the July 26 Movement and the old political and trade union groups are included, plus the very important element of the young men and women who are coming into the economic structure and political life without any previous connection with politics.

Construction of the PURSC started at the grass roots. Each farm, factory, public utility or working group of any type selected what were supposed to be their best men and women. . . . The PURSC is therefore a carefully chosen elite, dedicated to the Revolution. I asked Fidel if it was not similar in conception to the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, the Fascist Party in Italy and the Nazi Party in Germany, and he said that roughly it was. It does not govern; it has no administrative powers. Its function is to carry out the economic and political policies of the Government at every level. . . .

The Government, as now constituted is headed by an executive committee, or directorate, of six: Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Che Guevara, President Dorticos, Blas Roca (the old line, PSP, trade union leader who was a Cabinet Minister under Batista in the 1940s) and Emilio Aragones Navarro (former head of the Federation of Bank Workers, ex-26th of July Movement, an accountant from the middle class). Of the group, only Blas Roca is an old-style PSP Communist.

Fidel Not A Puppet of The Reds

"The belief fostered by Washington and the Cuban exiles that Fidel Castro is a prisoner of the Cuban Communist apparatus or a puppet of Moscow is a myth. He is, by character, incapable of accepting orders or even advice. The path he has chosen forces him into a conformity to most of the needs and desires of the Soviet bloc, but that is a different matter.

"Now that five years have passed, it is surely time for American officials and the American public to realize that whatever they want to think of Fidel Castro, he is one of the most extraordinary men of our age. The U.S. has paid heavily for a shocking underestimation of Fidel Castro's intelligence and abilities."

—Herbert L. Matthews: Return to Cuba.

Castro Less Friendly in Talking to Matthews About Kennedy (Then Alive) Than to Daniel

"President Kennedy was still alive when we saw Premier Castro, and his comments on President Kennedy were less friendly than they were more than three weeks later when he saw Jean Daniel, the French correspondent, just at the time President Kennedy was assassinated. President Kennedy, Fidel said, was doing more harm to the U.S. than to Cuba in the long run by policies aiming to destroy the Castro regime through isolation, trade embargoes and CIA support for counter-revolutionaries, saboteurs and guerrillas. 'The U.S. is essentially in a more dangerous position internationally than Cuba, and the U.S. will lose,' he said. 'Kennedy makes a fine speech to the American University, with its emphasis on peace, understanding, coexistence—and then he goes off to Berlin and makes a bellicose speech. How can you figure him out?'

"Fidel still has the primitive ideas one often finds in Latin American leftists of the U.S. as a rapacious, imperialistic, aggressive country. Like his associates, he is sure that there are going to be other revolutions in Latin America, although no one predicts where. However, Castro did inquire several times what the United States would do about Brazil when, as he seemed to expect, there is a revolution there.

"When we asked him about the subversion that Cubans are accused of in Latin America, he replied: 'Of course we engage in subversion, the training of guerrillas, propaganda! Why not? This is exactly what you are doing to us."

—Herbert L. Matthews: Return to Cuba.

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Secretary Rusk's Unctuous Concern for A World Common Law

(Continued from Page One)

Frankly we hope by giving the Matthews report wider circulation in our own pages to elicit comment in Western Europe which may shame the American government, press and public into an awareness of what a ludicrous figure we cut in the world by our state of mind on Cuba. We do not set outselves up in judgment over the *New York Times* but we do think it important to call attention to its timidity and the causes for it. The *New York Times* was the No. 1 target of Senator Eastland's Internal Security subcommittee in its 1955 attempt to "investigate", i.e. to smear and intimidate the press. Then the same committee in 1960 seized on the 1957 Matthews interview with Castro to draw a paranoid picture of Batista's downfall as due to a conspiracy between liberal newspapermen and certain officials in the State Department. These Congressional witch hunts added to other factors have created an arrogance, an ignorance, and a frustration over Cuba that make the U.S. a kind of "sick man" on the subject. There is no topic on which it is more dangerous to be objective in the United States today. Since such attitudes may again endanger world peace, this American sickness is a world problem.

Biggest Bargain Since Manhattan

We believe the observations we have culled from the Stanford Institute pamphlet by Mr. Matthews may help to develop a more adult and sober opinion in our own country. We believe the incident itself may help Western Europeans and neutrals to understand how the U.S. government is locked into rigid, inhumane and self-defeating attitudes toward Castro. We think this important at a time when our own government is trying to coerce its allies and friends into a blockade designed to strangle the Cuban revolution. It does not make our country look better to have this effort coupled, as Secretary of State Rusk coupled it at his last press conference, with unctuous asurances about our concern for developing what he calls a "world common law." If anything has been accepted as world common law, it is that an economic war like ours against Cuba is a violation of freedom of the seas and in direct conflict with the charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. Mr. Rusk demonstrated his own ideas of proper conduct in his Feb. 7 statement on Cuba by withholding the information that as early as Dec. 9 the Cuban government, through the Swiss government, notified us that its vessels would be fishing in the Gulf of Mexico near the Dry Tortugas. To have disclosed this would have exploded the idea the State Department fostered that the fishing boats were engaged in a provocation to get us out of Guantanamo. This is a question we are foolish to raise; no other country would dare claim that a treaty imposed by force on Cuba more than 60 years ago, under which we pay only $3,000 a year for 31 square miles of land and 14 square miles of harbor is somehow so sacrosanct that any move to question it calls for united action by all Christendom. Not since we bought Manhattan from the Indians did we pull off so fraudulent a deal and get so big a bargain as Guantanomo.

Castro and Religion

"Fidel Castro is a maverick among men, and it could be said that Marxist-Leninist Cuba is a maverick in the Communist fold. Religion is an example. The Roman Catholic Church (Cuba is perhaps 90% Catholic) naturally took a stand against Communism. For Fidel this was 'counter-revolution', and in 1960-61 there was a period of conflict during which he expelled most of the Spaniards who made up a large proportion of the clergy.

"However it was significant that Pope John XXIII and the Vatican never broke diplomatic relations with Havana. The controversy died down. Today, there is not only an Inter-Nuncio in Havana and a Cuban Ambassador at the Holy See, but there is complete freedom of religion. In speaking to one of the highest Catholic prelates in Cuba, I was told that freedom of worship was 'total'. One of the most important U.S. Protestant churchmen happened to be in Cuba when we were there and he said the same for the Protestant community.

"As Marxism-Leninism takes a stronger hold, religiosity will no doubt weaken, especially with the young, but that is for the future to determine. For the present, the attitude was doubtless well expressed by Fidel in speaking to us. 'I don't care whether a person is religious or not,' he said, 'or what his religion is'." *—Herbert L. Matthews: Return to Cuba.*

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